

Message Text

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2576

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 3152

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: SNAR, LA, UN

SUBJ: NARCOTICS - UN DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS IN LAOS

REF: VIENTIANE 2705

1. SUMMARY. INCB PRESIDENT REUTER HAS FORMALLY REQUESTED PGNU TO RECEIVE HIM AND BOARD'S SECRETARY DITTERT IN VIENTIANE IN MID-MAY. NO REPLY HAS AS YET BEEN RECEIVED. PURPOSE OF INCB VISIT WILL BE TO TRY DISSUADE PGNU FROM CHANGING LAO LAW TO PERMIT LICIT PRODUCTION OF NARCOTICS. THERE IS AGREEMENT BETWEEN REUTER AND DIRECTOR OF UNFDAC/DND MARTENS THAT WHAT PGNU APPEARS HAVE IN MIND RELATING POSSIBLE CHANGE IN LAW RAISES SERIOUS POLICY ISSUE WHICH FALLS WITHIN BOARD'S PURVIEW AND SHOULD BE CLARIFIED BY BOARD. MARTENS REPORTEDLY ACCEPTS INCB PRESIDENT'S POSITION THAT SUCH CLARIFICATION MUST BE OBTAINED BEFORE LEGAL TECHNICIAN COULD BE SENT TO LAOS. MARTENS ALSO INDICATES VIEW THAT IN EVENT PGNU ABROGATES LAW AND PERMITS LEGAL PRODUCTION UNFDAC SHOULD RECONSIDER PROCEEDING WITH DRUG CONTROL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN LAOS. UNFDAC TEAM PROPOSES VISIT LAOS AROUND MID-MAY TO DISCUSS DRUG CONTROL PROJECTS. TEAM WILL OPERATE ON GENERAL BASIS THAT UNFDAC WILL BE PREPARED
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TAKE OVER EXISTING U.S. BILATERAL DRUG CONTROL PROGRAMS

TO EXTENT USG WISHES AND PGNU AGREES. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING ARE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS RELATING UN DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS IN RESPECT OF LAOS.

3. INCB'S PRESIDENT REUTER AND SECRETARY DITTERT, DURING THEIR RECENT VISIT NEW YORK FOR MEETINGS ECOSOC, CALLED ON LAO CHARGE UNNY. DITTERT CHARACTERIZES DISCUSSION AS "VERY FRIENDLY".

4. REUTER, ON BOARD'S BEHALF, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS MADE BY LAOS IN RECENT YEARS, STATED THAT HE/DITTERT WOULD LIKE BE RECEIVED VIENTIANE IN MID-MAY, AND NOTED THAT PROPOSED TIMING REFLECTS BOARD'S GREAT INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT DRUG SITUATION AND IN DISCUSSING MANNER IN WHICH BOARD MIGHT BEST ASSIST PGNU. REUTER HANDED CHARGE AIDE MEMOIRE FORMALLY REQUESTING INVITATION FOR HIM/DITTERT VISIT LAOS IN MID-MAY.

5. CHARGE NOTED THAT PGNU IS NOW CONSIDERING CHANGING LAO LAW TO PERMIT LEGAL PRODUCTION OF NARCOTICS. REUTER EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN AT THIS NEWS. SAID INCB IS CLEAR THAT LAO AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONTROL PRODUCTION AND THAT FOR PGNU TO REVISE LAW TO MAKE LICIT WHAT HAS BEEN ILLICIT WOULD PERPETUATE SERIOUS DRUG SITUATION AND IMPERIL PEOPLE OF LAOS AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

6. DITTERT ADVISES THAT IN VIEW CURRENT SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, REUTER IS NOW NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT INCB VISIT LAOS WILL PROVE FEASIBLE IN NEAR FUTURE. HOWEVER, IF INVITATION RECEIVED, BOARD PLANS FOLLOW THROUGH ON VISIT, ASSUMING OF COURSE THAT SITUATION IN AREA PERMITS.

7. MARTENS HAS BEEN INFORMED BY DITTERT OF INCB'S REQUEST VISIT LAOS IN MID-MAY. HE ENTIRELY AGREES THAT WHAT PGNU APPEARS HAVE IN MIND RELATING POSSIBLE CHANGE IN LAO LAW RAISES SERIOUS POLICY ISSUE WHICH FALLS WITHIN PURVIEW OF INCB AND WHICH SHOULD BE CLARIFIED BY BOARD. HE ALSO REPORTEDLY ACCEPTS REUTER'S POSITION THAT SUCH CLARIFICATION
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MUST BE OBTAINED BEFORE LEGAL TECHNICIAN, PRESUMABLY ALFONS NOLL, COULD BE SENT TO LAOS AND THAT UNFDAC COULD NOT IN ANY EVENT PROVIDE LEGAL ADVICE LOOKING TOWARD WEAKENING OF PRESENT DRUG LAW. MARTENS ALSO INDICATES THAT IN EVENT LAW ABROGATED TO PERMIT LICIT NARCOTICS PRODUCTION HE BELIEVES UNFDAC SHOULD RECONSIDER PROCEEDING WITH DRUG CONTROL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN LAOS. ACCORDINGLY ON POLICY SIDE UNFDAC AND INCB ARE ON SAME WAVE LENGTH.

8. UNFDAC TEAM, CONSISTING OF MICUTA (UNFDAC/DND), GREENSHIELDS (FAO) AND POSSIBLY LING (WHO), INTENDS VISIT LAOS AROUND MID-MAY FOR ABOUT ONE WEEK TO DISCUSS UNFDAC PROGRAM LAOS. WE ARE ADVISED THAT TEAM'S INSTRUCTIONS ARE TO FOLLOWING EFFECT: (A) IF QUESTION OF RESUMING LAGAL NARCOTICS PRODUCTION IS RAISED, TEAM IS TO REFER LAO OFFICIALS TO INCB; (B) AT SAME THIME TEAM IS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT UNFDAC IS UNDERTAKING DRUG CONTROL PROJECTS IN LAOS ON ASSUMPTION LAW PROHIBITING NARCOTICS PRODUCTION IS MAINTAINED; (C) TEAM IS TO OPERATE ON GENERAL BASISTHAT UNFDAC WILL BE PREPARED TAKE OVER EXISTING U.S. BILATERAL DRUG CONTROL PROGRAMS TO EXTENT US DESIRES AND PGNU WILL PERMIT.

9. COMMENT: FOR EMBASSY VIENTIANE'S BACKGROUND, WE ARE PUZZLED AT ARNAUD'S COMMENTS (PARA 5 REFTTEL). WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THEY REFLECT HIS NEWNESS TO UN DRUG PICTURE AND LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH PERSONALITIES AND WITH DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN INCB (WHOSE FUNCTIONS STEM FROM DRUG TREATIES) ON ONE HAND AND UNFDAC/DND ON OTHER. IN ANY EVENT POLICY MATTER OF KIND WHICH NOW APPEARS TO BE UNDER CONSIDERATION BY PGNU DIFINITELY FALLS WITHIN INCB'S PURVIEW AND ANY CHANCE PERSUADE LAO NOT TO LEGALIZE PRODUCTION WOULD SEEM REQUIRE EFFORTS BY SENIOR OFFICIALS. AS ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE, PROFESSOR REUTER, FRENCH, IS EXPERT IN INTERNATIONAL LAW OF WORLD REPUTE. DITTERT, SWISS, IS SENIOR UN OFFICIAL LONG AND FAVORABLY KNOWN IN INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL CIRCLES WHO IS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE AND WHOLLY SUPPORTIVE OF US OBJECTIVES IN DRUG FIELD WHICH HE CONSIDERS COINCIDE ENTIRELY WITH THOSE OF INCB. ALFONS NOLL, TO WHOM ARNAUD REFERRED, IS JUNIOR LEVEL DND OFFICIAL OF FRG NATIONALITY WHO APPEARS BE COMPETENT LAWYER BUT CONFIDENTIAL

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HAS REPUTATION FOR BEING RIGID IN HIS VIEWS.
DALE

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